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AUTHOR Barnett, Rosalind C.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

Until recently, adult daughter-parent relationships have received little research attention. This study examined the quality of experiences adult daughters (N=308) have in their current relationships with their mothers and fathers and the effects of the quality of these relationships on the daughter's psychological well-being/distress. The sample of daughters was drawn from a larger, disproportionate, random, stratified sample of women ages 25 to 55, who were employed as social workers or licensed practical nurses, and who resided within a 25-mile radius of Boston. Quality of experience in the daughter role was assessed separately for the daughter-mother and daughter-father roles. Overall, daughters reported positive experiences with each parent. Having a positive relationship with one's parent(s) was associated with daughters' reports of high well-being. Having a poor relationship with one's mother was associated with reports of psychological distress, particularly among daughters who were not themselves married/partnered. Having a poor relationship with one's father was also associated with psychological distress, especially among daughters whose fathers were widowed. Race and social class variables were examined for their main and interactive effects on psychological well-being/distress. (Author/ABL)

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Abstract

This paper examines the quality of experience adult daughters (N = 308) have in their current relationships with their mothers and fathers and the effects of the quality of these relationships on the daughters' psychological well-being/distress. The daughters represent a subsample drawn from a larger disproportionate, random, stratified sample of women ages 25 to 55, who were employed as social workers or licensed practical nurses, and who resided within a 25-mile radius of Boston. The sample varies in race, social class, number of parents still alive, and family-role pattern, i.e., roughly half were married/partnered, roughly half were mothers. Quality of experience in the daughter role was assessed separately for the daughter-mother and daughter-father roles. Overall, daughters report positive experiences with each parent. Having a positive relationship with one's parent(s) was associated with daughters' reports of high well-being. The impact of a poor relationship with one's parents on a daughter's psychological distress was conditioned by role-pattern variables. Having a poor relationship with one's mother was associated with reports of psychological distress (i.e., symptoms of anxiety and depression), particularly among daughters who were not themselves married/partnered. Having a poor relationship with one's father was also associated with psychological distress, especially among daughters whose fathers were widowed. Race and social class variables were examined for their main and interactive effects on psychological well-being/distress.

This paper examines both the quality of adult daughters' relationships with their mothers and fathers and the effects of differences in daughter-role quality on the daughters' psychological health (i.e., well-being and distress). Demographic trends toward increased longevity have created a situation in which, during most of her adult years, a daughter has at least one living parent, usually the mother. This phenomenon is relatively recent; in 1963, less than 25 percent of people over 45 had a surviving parent, by 1980, 40 percent of people in their late fifties had a living parent. Not only are people living longer, but they are living longer in good health. One consequence of these trends is that the relationships adult daughters have with their parents, especially with their mothers, are the longest lasting relationships they are ever likely to have. Further, for most of these years the parent will be healthy. Yet until recently adult daughter-parent relationships have received scant research attention. Moreover, there is reason to believe that these relationships have important effects on the psychological health of adult daughters (Baruch & Barnett, 1983; Baruch, Barnett, & Rivers, 1985).

Particularly lacking is information on daughter-father relationships during the daughter's middle years. With the exception of clinical studies (see for example, Appelton, 1981), our knowledge of the relationships adult daughters have with their fathers during these years is quite limited. This dearth of studies may reflect the cultural assumption that the primary intergenerational bonds are between daughters and mothers. In the absence of data on daughter-father relationships, we have relied on the literature pertaining to daughter-mother relationships to generate hypotheses concerning

both daughter-mother and daughter-father relationships.

The focus of psychological research on adult daughter-mother relationships has been almost exclusively on parent care during the years when the elderly mother is frail and in need of care (Brody, 1981, 1985; Brody & Schonoover, 1986; Lang & Brody, 1983; Shanas, 1979a). With few exceptions (Baruch & Barnett, 1983; Fischer, 1981), there has been little specific attention paid to the nature of adult daughter-mother relationships during the time when both are healthy and issues of parent care are irrelevant.

The dominant assumption coloring research on the daughter-mother relationship in later life is that is negative, i.e., demanding and difficult (Archbold, 1978; Barnett, forthcoming). The stress associated with this role is assumed to be particularly acute among daughters who are in their middle years and are employed. These women are viewed as "caught in the middle" between demands from their jobs, their own families, and their mothers (Brody, 1981; Stueve & O'Donnell, 1984). Little attention is paid to the benefits to be derived for the adult daughter from having a relationship, especially a good relationship, with her mother.

In addition to the above limitations, the literature in this area is marked by a lack of attention to the impact of race and social class variables. In all the available studies, the subjects have been white, middle-class women. The literature on black families suggests that daughter-mother bonds are very strong (Brown & Gary, 1985; Hines & Boyd-Franklin, 1982; Stack, 1975), perhaps stronger than those among whites. There is also evidence that social class variables have a powerful impact on daughter-mother relationships. In contrast to middle-class patterns, studies

of low-income and working-class families consistently show close and active ties between the married adult daughter and her mother (Belle, 1982; Cohler & Grunebaum, 1981; Rubin, 1976; Young & Willmott, 1957). For example, after marriage, lower-class adult daughters tend to settle near their mothers, whereas upper- and middle-class daughters do not.

A limited number of recent studies have focused on the daughter-mother relationship in the period of time when the mother is neither very old nor frail (Baruch & Barnett, 1983; Fischer, 1986). These studies have looked at such aspects of this relationship as companionship and the daughter's identification with the mother as a role model for aging. These two studies suggest that adult daughters have positive experiences in their relationships with their mothers.

Baruch and Barnett (1983) found that adult daughters' positive feelings toward their mothers were related to the daughter's feelings of self-esteem. However, this effect was significantly moderated by the pattern of roles occupied by the daughter. The fewer roles a daughter occupied, the greater the impact; the greater the number of roles a daughter occupied, the lower the impact. Thus, the impact on self-esteem of a positive relationship with one's mother was weakest among daughters who had other major relationships, i.e., women who were married and had children. The impact was strongest among daughters who did not have other major relationships, i.e., never-married daughters.

The gerontological literature suggests that the nature of parents' relationships with their daughter may change upon the death of one of the parents. When both parents are alive, they turn to each other for support;

when only one parent is alive, the adult daughter becomes a more salient target for parental needs. Thus after the death of one parent, the daughter's relationship with her surviving parent intensifies (Lopata, 1979; Shanas, 1979a, 1979b, 1980). It follows that the effects of the quality of a daughter's relationship with a parent on her psychological health may be more powerful if the parent is widowed. Thus, parents' widowhood status differences may also moderate the relationship between daughter-role quality and psychological outcomes.

The impact of ongoing intergenerational relationships on the psychological health of adult daughters warrants inquiry for a variety of reasons. It is widely held that parent-child relationships, especially during the child's early years, have important influences on the child's psychological health. Positive parent-child relationships are thought to enhance several aspects of psychological well-being, especially self-esteem, whereas negative relationships are associated with psychological distress. In contrast to the large body of research on parent-child relationships during the child's early years, those of the later years have received limited attention. Yet the limited data suggest that the daughter-mother relationship has important effects.

The present study examines the effect on variables measuring daughters' well-being and psychological distress (the variables are described in the Methods section) of daughter-mother and daughter-father role quality. Role quality refers to the daughters' subjective experiences in these relationships and is defined more specifically below. The moderating effects of race,[2] SES,[3] daughters' role-pattern differences, and parent's widowhood status[4] are

also examined. The specific hypotheses are as follows:

1. Daughter-mother and daughter-father role quality are related positively to daughter's psychological well-being; high role quality will enhance well-being, low role quality will diminish well-being.

2. Daughter-mother and daughter-father role quality are related inversely to psychological distress; high daughter-role quality will be associated with low levels of psychological distress, low daughter-role quality will be associated with high levels of distress.

Methods

Subjects

The sample for the larger study consisted of 404 women, ages 25 to 55, who were currently employed at least half-time and who resided within a 25-mile radius of Boston. Subjects were drawn randomly from the registries of two health-care professions -- licensed practical nurses and social workers. The sample was stratified on race, partnership status and parental status[5]. Data were collected from the fall of 1985 to the spring of 1986.

Recruitment into the study proceeded in two steps. All potential subjects received a mailing that included a letter from the project directors and a description of the study. Potential subjects were then contacted by telephone and screened by a trained interviewer. Subjects who met additional criteria and belonged to cells that were not already filled were interviewed for the study. These criteria were predominantly work related. All subjects had to be currently employed at least half-time in their respective field or in a related field and had to have been working continuously at least half-time for at least a year in that occupation and for at least the past three months in their present job.

1. Social workers. Recruitment letters were sent to 2288 female social workers living within our sampling area. We received notification that 6 were deceased and 48 had moved out of the area. We, therefore, had a final

"population" of 2234 (roughly half of the social workers in the Boston area). Of the 2234, 364 (16.3%) were never reached, primarily because they moved and had left no forwarding address. Our refusal rate was 2.7 % of those contacted.

2. Licensed practical nurses. Recruitment letters were sent to 2720 female LPN's living in our sampling area. We received notification that 28 were deceased and 47 had moved out of the area. We, therefore, had a final "population" of 2645 (roughly one third of the LPN's in the Boston area.) The registry was very out of date; many of the addresses were from 1983 or earlier. Of these 2645, 49.5% were never reached, primarily because they had moved and left no forwarding address and/or did not have a phone and did not answer our letter requesting that they contact us. (If our recruitment letter was delivered and the screening interviewer was unable to locate a telephone number, two separate letters were sent providing the project's telephone number and often the screener's phone number and requesting that the potential respondent either contact us or provide us with a phone number at which we could reach her. We also went door-to-door to locate LPN's, but abandoned this effort when it became clear that most LPN's had moved and the results of our efforts did not warrant the expense.) Of LPN's with a listed phone number, only 12.2% could not be contacted. Our refusal rate was 4 % of those LPN's that we contacted.

Results of the screening procedure indicated that failure to meet the criterion of being employed at least half-time in an occupation that was either social work or LPN-related was the main reason for ineligibility. Of the social workers we contacted, 37.7% met this criteria; among LPN's the

comparable figure was 42.2%. In addition, potential subjects were ineligible if they were primarily self-employed or if they worked rotating or night shifts. Of all the social workers who were ineligible, 74% were ineligible for work-related reasons. The comparable percent for LPN's was 87%.

The mean age of the sample was 39.5 years (sd = 7.4). Half of the sample were partnered (n = 198, 49.1%), and roughly half were parents (n = 227, 56.3%). The mean individual income for the sample was $24,400 (SD = $10,700). As expected, many more women had mothers who were alive (n = 308, 76.0%) than had fathers who were alive (n = 235, 58.3%). The mean age of the mothers was 66.3 years (SD =8.4), the mean age of the fathers was 67.6 years (SD =8.5). Subjects were interviewed at length about various role-related sources of gratification and of concern as well as about stress-related psychological and physical problems. Interviews took roughly 2 hours to complete.

Measures

Role quality. Based on previous research (Baruch & Barnett, 1983) and pilot studies, we identified the rewarding and distressing aspects of adult daughters' relationships with their mothers and with their fathers. On the basis of response frequency, nine reward items and 10 concern items were identified. Interestingly, the rewarding and distressing aspects mentioned were virtually identical for relationships with both mothers and fathers.

Subjects used a 4-point scale (from 1=Not at all[6] to 4= Extremely) to indicate to what extent, if at all, each of the items was currently rewarding

or distressing. Each subject with a living parent received three scores: a mean reward score (her mean response to the reward items) for the relationship with that parent, a mean concern score, and a role-quality score (i.e., the difference between the mean reward and the mean concern score). The role-quality scores constitute our overall index of the quality of experience daughters have in their relationships with each parent. To establish the reliabilities of these three scores test-retest reliability coefficients and Cronbach's alphas were computed. Test-retest reliability coefficients were calculated for a 10% subsample (n =35) reinterviewed within two months of their initial interview. With the exception of the test-retest reliability coefficient for concerns in the daughter-mother relationship (r = .79), the coefficients ranged between r = .90 and r = .94. Cronbach's alphas were .75 and .76 for the two concern scales (i.e., daughter-mother and daughter-father concerns) and .93 and .94 for the two reward scales.

Psychological distress. Psychological distress was assessed by the anxiety and depression subscales of the SCL-90-R, a frequency of symptoms measure (Derogatis, 1975). The SCL-90-R has high levels of both internal consistency and test-retest reliability. Coefficient alphas range between .77 and .90 for the primary symptom dimensions and test-retest coefficients range between .78 and .90 (Derogatis, 1983). In addition, norms are provided separately for men and for women and for non-clinical populations. Subjects indicated on 5-point scales (from 0 = not at all, to 4 = extremely) how often they were bothered by each of 17 symptoms of anxiety and 13 symptoms of depression. The decision to combine the scales into a psychological distress score was based on the high zero-order correlation (r = .80) between the scales and on the similarity in the pattern of correlations between the

anxiety and depression scales and the other variables of interest in the study.

Psychological well-being. Well-being was assessed by responses to a 14 - item scale developed by the Rand Corporation (Davies, Sherbourne, Peterson, & Ware, 1985). Cronbach's alpha was .92 and the one-year test-retest reliability estimate was r = .63 (Veit & Ware, 1983). Subjects were asked to respond on 6-point scales (from 0 = not at all to 6 = extremely) to such items as, "How often in the past did you feel relaxed and free of tension? " "How often in the past did you expect in the morning to have an interesting day?"

Results

Daughter-Mother and Daughter-Father Role Quality

On average, daughters found their relationships with their parents to be more rewarding than problematic. Moreover, adult daughters reported strikingly similar levels of rewards and concerns in their relationships with their mothers and with their fathers. Daughters typically described the rewarding aspects of their relationships with each parent as between somewhat and considerably rewarding (M = 2.63, SD = .81; M = 2.60, SD = .81, for daughter-mother and daughter-father rewards, respectively). The average level of concerns was between not at all and somewhat (M = 1.62; SD = .45, M = 1.48, SD = .40, for daughter-mother and daughter-father concerns, respectively). For the sample as a whole, the quality of the daughter-mother and daughter-father roles was positive and virtually identical (M = 1.01, SD =

1.07; M = 1.13, SD = 1.01, respectively). Thus taking into account both the rewarding and problematic aspects of the daughter role, employed adult daughters have positive experiences in their relationships with their mothers and fathers.

Racial differences were found for both rewards and concerns and role quality. Compared to white daughters, black daughters reported significantly higher levels of reward in their relationships with their mothers and, although not significant, higher levels of reward in their relationships with their fathers (M = 2.58, M = 2.97; t (306) = -3.17, p< .002; M = 2.76, M = 2.58, t (229) = -1.08, ns, respectively). In contrast, white daughters compared to black daughters reported significantly higher levels of concern in their relationships with both their mothers and their fathers (M = 1.66, M = 1.42, t(306) = 4.12, p< .001; M = 1.50, M = 1.35, t(228) = 2.02, p = .051, respectively). Overall, black daughters' role quality scores were higher than white daughters'. For daughter-mother role quality, the difference was significant (M = 1.55, M = .92; t (262) = -4.28, p <.001), for daughter-father role quality, the difference was not significant (M = 1.41, M = 1.09; t (202) = -1.54, ns).

The daughter-mother and daughter-father reward and concern items, their mean scores, and their ranks (when ordered from most to least rewarding and from most to least problematic) are presented in Table 1. The most rewarding

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Insert Table 1 about here

Table 1

Rewards and Concerns Items for Daughter Role

Reward Items	Mother Rewards[a] M	SD	Rank	Father Rewards[b] M	SD	Rank
1. Having a mother/father who lets you know she/he cares about you.	3.08	.94	1	3.00	.98	1.5
2. Your mother/father getting along well with important people in your life--children, husband/partner, friends.	2.80	1.02	2	2.78	1.05	3
3. Having a close relationship with your mother/father.	2.77	.99	3	3.00	.98	1.5
4. Getting along smoothly with your mother/father.	2.75	.97	4	2.76	.92	4
5. Having a mother/father who helps out when you need her/him.	2.72	1.08	5	2.65	1.05	8
6. Enjoying your mother's/father's companionship.	2.66	.95	6	2.70	.99	5
7. Having a mother/father who is a good example or model of getting older.	2.65	1.08	7	2.68	1.12	6
8. Being able to talk over your problems with your mother/father.	2.18	1.05	8	2.04	.93	9
9. Being able to count on her/him to help out financially.	2.10	1.13	9	2.15	1.15	7

[a] $N = 308$. [b] $N = 235$.

Table 1 cont'd

Concern Items	Mother Concerns[a] M	SD	Rank	Father Concerns[b] M	SD	Rank
1. Seeing your mother/father age and worrying about how she/he will manage as she/he gets older.	2.37	.94	1	2.26	.95	1
2. Feeling guity or uncertain about your obligations to your mother/father	1.90	.92	2	1.68	.85	2
3. Having to act like a parent to your mother/father	1.81	.96	3	1.51	.82	11
4. A difficult or poor relationship with your mother/father.	1.78	.94	4	1.61	.75	3
5. Your mother's/father's disapproval or not understanding of your way of life.	1.44	.78	6	1.46	.70	5
6. Figuring out arrangements for your mother's/ father's care--nursing home, help, etc.	1.44	.78	6	1.39	.72	6
7. Having a mother/father who interferes or intrudes in your own life.	1.37	.70	7	1.18	.47	10
8. Having a mother/father who doesn't help when you need her/him.	1.33	.67	8	1.27	.57	7
9. Having to financially support your mother/father.	1.32	.65	9	1.19	.53	9
10. Being personally involved in the physical care of your mother/father.	1.29	.66	10	1.22	.59	8

a $N = 308$. b $N = 235$.

aspects of these relationships are: Having a mother/father who lets you know she/he cares about you, and Your mother/father getting along well with important people in your life -- children, husband/partner, friends. The least rewarding aspects are: Being able to talk over your problems with your mother/father, and Being able to count on her/him to help out financially. Overall caring and getting along is more rewarding than is relying on mother or father to meet specific needs. The aspects of most concern are Seeing your mother/father age and worrying about how she/he will manage as she/he gets older, and Feeling guilty or uncertain about your obligations to your mother/father. The aspects of least concern are: Being personally involved in the physical care of your mother/father, and Having to financially support your mother/father. Loss and obligation are of more concern than is instrumental care.

Effects of Daughter-Role Quality on Daughter's Well-Being

To test hypothesis one, i.e., daughter-role quality is related positively to psychological well-being, the following six predictors were entered into the regression equation: race, SES, partnership status, parental status[7], mother's (or father's) widowhood status, and the role-quality score in the relationship with the respective parent, with scores on the Rand Well-Being Scale as the outcome variable. The regression model tested the direct effects of each predictor as well as the interaction of each with daughter-role quality. That is, we examined whether the relationship of the role-quality scores to well-being was conditioned by the daughter's race, SES, partnership

status, parental status, or parent's widowhood status. The final model which is discussed here consists of the original six predictors and any significant interactions.

The final model for the daughter-mother relationship contained seven predictors, the original six and one interaction term, and was significant ($F(7, 289) = 7.35$, $p<.001$), as shown in Table 2. As expected, high daughter-mother role quality was associated with high well-being ($B = 7.76$,

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Insert Table 2 about here

$p<.001$). Moreover, this relationship held for all daughters, i.e., it held after controlling for the effects of race, SES, role-pattern differences, or mothers' widowhood status. In addition, the interaction between daughter-mother role quality and social class was significant ($B = -.19$, $p<.05$); the relationship between positive daughter-role quality and well-being was more pronounced among lower-SES daughters. If the relationship with the mother is troubled, the daughter's well-being score is relatively low, regardless of her SES. If the relationship is good, lower-SES daughters reap a greater mental health benefit than higher-SES daughters, perhaps reflecting stronger daughter-mother ties.

The six-variable regression model was significant for the daughter-father relationship ($F(6, 216) = 5.46$, $p<.001$). Positive daughter-father role quality was associated with high well-being ($B = 3.31$, $p<.001$), as shown in Table 2. In addition, lower-SES daughters reported higher daughter-father role

Table 2

Effects of Daughter-Role Quality on Daughter's Psychological Well-Being

Predictor	B[a]	p
Daughter-Mother Role [b]		
Race	.72	ns
SES	.04	ns
Parental Status	1.29	ns
Partnership Status	3.86	.004
Widowhood Status	.19	ns
Daughter-Mother Role Quality	7.76	.001
Daughter-Mother Role Quality x SES	-.19	.05
R^2 = .15		
Daughter-Father Role [c]		
Race	2.08	ns
SES	-.29	.03
Parental Status	2.62	ns
Partnership Status	1.66	ns
Widower Status	-.44	ns
Daughter-Father Role Quality	3.31	.001
R^2 = .13		

[a] Unstandardized regression coefficients.

[b] N = 307, df = 6,299.

[c] N = 230, df = 6,222.

quality (B = -.29, p = .03). None of the interaction terms was significant, i.e., among daughters 25 to 55 years of age, the positive relationship between daughter-father role quality and daughters' well-being was unaffected by race, SES, differences in daughters' role patterns, or fathers' widowhood status.

The findings from the above two analyses confirm hypothesis one: daughters' current relationships with their parents are related positively to their experience of well-being.

Effect of Daughter-Role Quality on Daughters' Psychological Distress

To test hypothesis two, i.e., that daughter-role quality is inversely related to psychological distress, the same set of six predictors was entered into separate regression equations for the daughter-mother and daughter-father relationships, with the combined anxiety and depression scores of the SCL-90-R as the outcome variable. Here again, interaction effects were tested for each predictor with daughter-role quality. For the daughter-mother relationship a seven variable regression model was significant ($F(7, 288) = 6.46$, $p < .001$), as shown in Table 3. In general, the better a daughter's relationship with her mother,

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Insert Table 3 about here

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the fewer symptoms of anxiety and depression she reported (B = -6.00,

Table 3

Effects of Daughter-Role Quality on Daughter's Psychological Distress

Predictor	B[a]	p
Daughter-Mother Role [b]		
Race	-2.25	ns
SES	-.06	ns
Parental Status	-1.51	ns
Partnership Status	-5.45	.01
Widowhood Status	-.35	ns
Daughter-Mother Role Quality	-6.00	.001
Daughter-Mother Role Quality x Daughter's Partnership Status	3.96	.005
R^2 = .14		
Daughter-Father Role [c]		
Race	-3.79	ns
SES	.18	ns
Parental Status	-3.71	.05
Partnership Status	2.34	ns
Widower Status	-6.81	ns
Father-Daughter Role Quality	-6.62	.004
Father-Daughter Role Quality x Father's Widower Status	4.47	.08
R^2 = .10		

[a] Unstandardized regression coefficients.

[b] N = 307, df = 6,299.

[c] N = 230, df = 6,222.

$p<.001$). However, daughters' role-pattern variables were significant moderators. As shown in Figure One, occupying the role of partner, but not of parent, affected the relationship between daughter-mother role quality and psychological distress ($B = 3.96$, $p = .005$).

Insert Figure 1 about here

The effects of daughter-mother role quality on psychological distress were stronger among non-partnered than among partnered daughters. Interestingly, daughters' parental status had neither main nor interactive effects on this relationship. In other words, the effect of daughter-mother role quality had a greater effect on the psychological health of daughters who were not currently in another significant adult relationship. Moreover, this relationship was not significantly affected by race, SES, or mother's widowhood status.

With respect to the daughter-father relationship, a seven predictor model was significant ($F(7, 213) = 3.54$, $p < .001$). Having a poor relationship with one's father was related to reporting more symptoms of psychological distress ($B = -6.62$, $p<.004$). In addition, daughters whose fathers were widowers reported more anxiety and distress than daughters whose fathers and mothers were both alive ($B = -6.81$, $p = .07$[8]). Moreover, there was a significant interaction between father's widowhood status and daughter-father role quality, as shown in Figure Two. Among daughters whose father's were widowed, poor daughter-father role quality had a stronger negative effect on

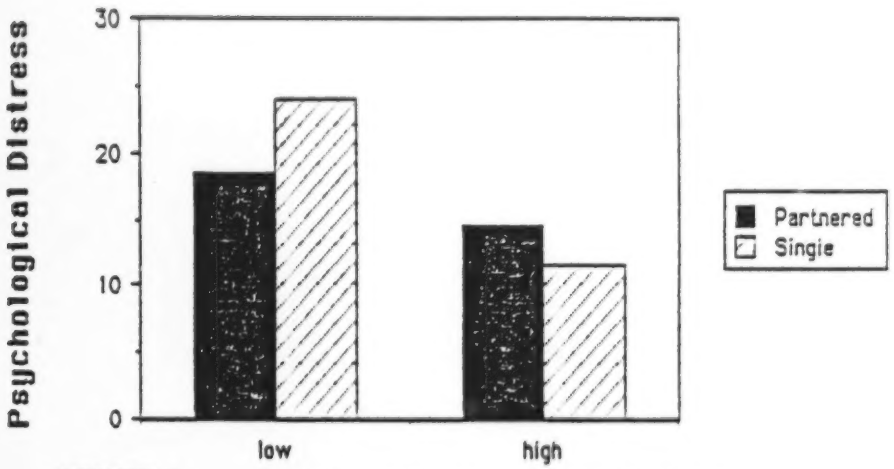

FIGURE 1 : Daughter-Mother Role Quality

Insert Figure 2 about here

distress than among daughters whose fathers and mothers were both alive (B = 4.47, p =.08). Daughters are especially vulnerable to the negative effects of poor quality in their relationship to their father when there is no mother present. This pattern was true regardless of race, SES, or differences in daughters' role pattern. Thus for all daughters, poor daughter-father role quality has negative effects which are especially strong if the father is a widower.

These two sets of findings provide support for hypothesis two; poor daughter-mother and poor daughter-father role quality are each associated with higher distress levels among adult daughters.

Discussion and Conclusions

Employed adult daughters have positive relationships with both their mothers and their fathers. We see no evidence for the tensions assumed to plague adult daughter-parent relationships, especially among daughters who are "caught in the middle" between the demands of their work, their own families, and their parents. The finding that these relationships are generally positive is even more surprising when we consider that the subjects are employed in stressful occupations, where work-related demands are expected to be particularly high.

Both hypotheses concerning the effect of daughter-role quality on

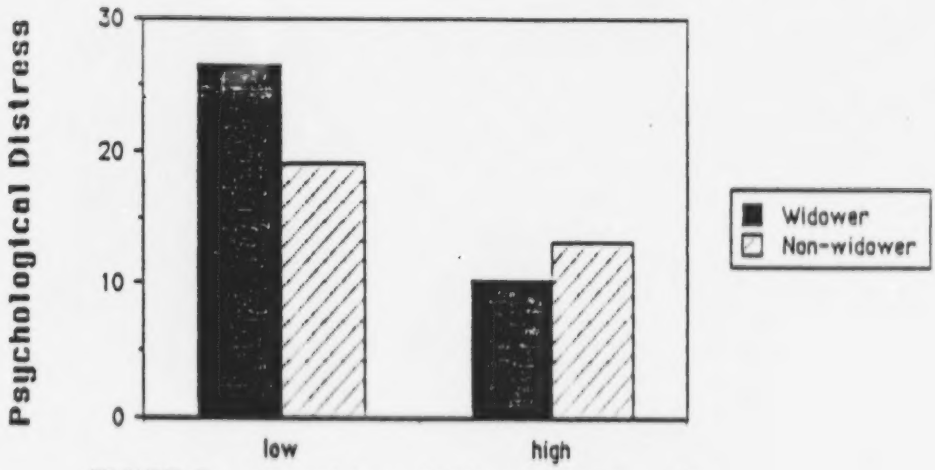

FIGURE 2: Daughter-Father Role Quality

daughters' psychological health were confirmed. The quality of adult daughter's relationships with their parents was related positively to daughters' well-being and negatively to daughters' psychological distress. These results held for all daughters, regardless of race, SES, and role-pattern differences. They also held for relationships with each parent, regardless of the parent's widowhood status.

Interestingly, adult daughters' relationships with their fathers, which have been largely ignored in the empirical literature, have a substantial effect on daughters' psychological well-being and as great an effect on daughters' distress as do the relationships with their mothers. This finding contrasts sharply with the widely held but untested assumption that the relationships adult daughters have with their mothers are more psychologically significant than those they have with their fathers.

Good daughter-father role quality was associated with well-being; poor daughter-father role quality, with psychological distress. Interestingly, daughters' role-pattern differences did not affect the relationship between daughter-father role quality and daughters' psychological distress. In contrast, father's widowhood status had a significant effect. The negative psychological effects of having a stressful relationship with one's father were particularly strong among daughters whose fathers were widowers. This finding suggests that the presence of a mother may act as a buffer. As long as the mother is alive, the daughter may be insulated from the deleterious health effects of stressors in the daughter-father relationship.

As predicted, the role quality of a daughter's relationship with her mother affected her well-being and her psychological distress. Good

daughter-mother role quality was associated with positive mental health, poor-role quality with negative mental health for all daughters. With respect to symptoms of anxiety and depression, poor daughter-mother role quality was associated with higher scores. However, daughters' partnership status conditioned this relationship. Under conditions of and poor daughter-mother role quality, daughters who were partnered reported far fewer symptoms of distress than did daughters who were not partnered. This finding replicates in part Baruch and Barnett's earlier finding (1983): the more roles a daughter occupies, the less is the impact of a poor daughter-mother relationship on her overall psychological health. In this study, only the role of partner (not of parent) had a moderating effect on the relationship between daughter-mother role quality and psychological distress. In contrast to the findings pertaining to the daughter-father relationship, the mother's widowhood status did not condition the effects of daughter-mother role quality on the daughters' psychological distress. Thus, the impact of the daughter-mother relationship on the daughter's psychological distress was moderated by her own partnership status rather than her mother's.

Compared to white daughters, black daughters had higher daughter-role quality. The pattern of relationships between daughter role-quality and psychological health, however, were similar for black and white daughters. Social-class effects were somewhat stronger than race effects. Lower-SES daughters reported higher daughter-father role quality and the positive effects of daughter-mother role quality on daughters' well-being was especially strong among lower-SES daughters. These findings support those of previous researchers (for example, Belle, 1982; Rubin, 1976) suggesting closer intergenerational ties among lower-SES daughters. Since most of the

literature on black families has focused on lower-SES black families, the close relationships reported between the generations may perhaps be understood as function of social class as well as of race. However, these findings may affected by several characteristics of the sample: the SES range of the sample was relatively restricted; the sample consisted of women who were all employed, and the subjects were employed in two health-care professions, i.e., licensed practical nursing and social worker. It is impossible to determine whether daughters' employment status or these particular occupations affected the results.

Future research may ascertain whether these findings can be generalized to a wider range of socioeconomic and occupational groups.

Footnotes

1. This paper is based on data from a larger study of white and black women, 25 to 55 years of age, who vary in socioeconomic class. The sample was drawn for a short-term longitudinal study of workplace and non-workplace stressors among women health-care providers. Data for this paper come from the first (of three) interviews and were collected in 1986-87. This project was funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (OHO 01968).

2. Because of the low percentage of black social workers in the occupational registry, random sampling techniques were inadequate to locate our sample. We, therefore, combined random sampling with snowball techniques and developed a census of all registered black social workers in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. (We contacted every black social worker known to us and solicited names of additional black social workers. We repeated this procedure until no new names were offered.) Using these procedures, we located 145 (86%) employed black social workers of the 169 registered black social workers in our sampling area. The percent of black LPNs in the professional registry was large enough to allow us to locate our sample using our random sampling strategy. Therefore, it was not necessary to develop a census of black LPNs.

3. Social class (SES) is a composite variables (including education, income, and occupation). Scores reflect the results of a principal components analysis.

4. From the survey data, we actually know only whether a subjects' mother

or father are alive or dead. Thus when we say that the subject's mother is a "widow," we mean that the subject's mother is alive and her father is dead. We do not know whether the mother is remarried to a man other than the subject's father. Thus the group of mothers who are "widows" comprise women who are indeed widows as well as those who are remarried. For this reason, any reported effects of widowhood status are conservative; presumably the effects would be stronger if the widow group was a pure group. The same is true for fathers widowhood status. Since mothers' age and widowhood status were significantly correlated ($r = -.42$, $p<.0001$), it was not possible to include mothers' age in the regression model. Widowhood status was a theoretically more interesting variable, hence, it was selected for use in further analyses. The same reasoning led to the inclusion of father's widowhood status and the exclusion of fathers' age as determinants.

5. Certain cells were especially difficult to fill because of their low frequency in the population. The rarest cell was partnered without children. Only among the white social workers were we able to fill that cell. Given that the younger women in this cell, who are in their child-bearing years, may have only recently finished their professional training, the fact that they do not yet have children is not surprising. It may also be that delaying marrying and delaying child bearing or deciding not to have children is a more common pattern in this group. Among a this pattern was rare among whites and blacks, perhaps because they finish their training well before the age for admission into the study and have already begun their families.In fact we were unable to find any black LPNs in that cell.

6. For both the reward and concern scales, the "not at all" response

option was used to mean both that the item was not applicable, i.e., it was irrelevant to the relationship and that it was applicable but either not at all a reward or not at all a concern.

7. It was not possible to include daughters' age in the regression model because it was correlated too highly with parental status (r = .48, p<.001). Daughters' age was omitted from the analyses since our particular interest was in examining the impact of role-pattern differences on daughters' relationships with their parents.

8. Because of the dearth of theory and data on adult daughter-father relationships, we decided to discuss any findings that were significant at p <.10. In this way we avoid making Type 1 errors, which seems desirable at the stage of research into this relationship.

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